

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE****Glenn MICALLEF****Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport****1. General competence, European commitment and personal independence**

*What aspects of your personal qualifications and experience are particularly relevant for becoming Commissioner and promoting the European general interest, particularly in the area you would be responsible for? How will you contribute to implementing the political guidelines of the Commission? How will you implement gender mainstreaming and integrate a gender perspective into all policy areas of your portfolio? How will you implement youth mainstreaming?*

*What guarantees of independence are you able to give Parliament, and how would you make sure that any past, current or future activities you carry out could not cast doubt on the performance of your duties within the Commission?*

It is a great honour to be entrusted by President-elect von der Leyen as Commissioner-designate with the first ever portfolio for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport. I consider this portfolio as a strategic investment in the EU's future, democracy, and well-being, delivering tangible benefits to citizens and empowering them to achieve their full potential.

I believe that my qualifications and experience make me well-suited to promote the European general interest. My passion for the EU project was sparked as a trainee at the European Parliament, and I have since held various EU-related positions, including Director General at the EU Coordination Department (2018-2020), Head of Secretariat of the Prime Minister (2020-2024), and Sherpa to the Prime Minister and EU Affairs Advisor (2020-2024).

Given my past roles, especially my most recent positions, which have enabled me to participate in all discussions of the Cabinet of Ministers for the last four years, I have personally experienced several challenges which the sectors within the portfolio assigned to me as Commissioner-Designate are currently facing, and I am aware of the many opportunities in these areas.

I have also been very active in youth, sport and cultural organisations at the local, national and international level. I was Council President and Member of the St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation, Vice President of a local football club, Vice President and International Secretary of the Labour Youths (Malta), President of the Socialist Students Union and Control Commission Member of the International Union of Socialist Youth. I believe that these hands-on experiences gave me the opportunity to live the portfolio assigned to me, and taught me invaluable lessons, prime of which is the crucial role played by volunteers and other stakeholders in these sectors. I look forward to working very closely with the European Parliament and the Council to capitalise on the many opportunities in every one of the sectors in the assigned portfolio.

If confirmed, supporting people, strengthening our society and our social model will be at the core of my work to promote intergenerational fairness in Europe. To fulfil this task, I will continue working to further enable Europe's children and youth as actors of change, empowering them to make a difference in terms of sustainability and intergenerational solidarity, and to prepare a holistic Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness which fully takes into consideration the impact of today's decisions on future generations and feedback of all age groups. The setting up and implementation of the President's Youth Advisory Board and the annual Youth Policy Dialogues of the College members, the outcomes of which will naturally inform the Strategy on Intergenerational fairness, will be key deliverables. I am looking forward to starting the Youth Dialogues in the first 100 days of my mandate and I will work closely with fellow Commissioners to support organisation of their dialogues. If confirmed, I will ensure youth mainstreaming also through the establishment of a 'youth check', to be applied to a full range of Commission initiatives which have a significant youth relevance.

Culture plays a crucial role in the European Union. Our rich and diverse cultural tapestry is a public good that improves the quality of life of our citizens and their mental health, whilst fostering a sense of belonging. It also contributes to our economy, to Europe's sustainable prosperity and its competitiveness. The point of departure of our work in this area will be the Cultural Compass – our vision for the sector for the next mandate and beyond.

If confirmed, I will work in the spirit of full collaboration together with the President and all Members of the College to ensure that the Political Guidelines and the College's collective responsibilities to EU citizens are implemented fully and in a timely manner.

The EU is committed to gender equality across all policies, as enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. If confirmed, I commit to upholding gender mainstreaming across the various policy areas within my portfolio. I will address gender disparities, promote equality and mutual respect, and advance gender equality through international cultural diplomacy and sport diplomacy. I will also implement the EU's Youth Strategy to address combined gender and age inequalities. Concerning the programmes under my responsibility, I am dedicated to ensuring these instruments always feature a strong gender and social inclusion dimension.

I am fully aware of the highest degree of independence required in the role of Member of the College of the Commissioners as per Articles 17.3 TEU and 245 TFEU and the Code of Conduct for Commissioners. During my career in public administration, I have maintained strict independence from any other role I held. In my service, I have been guided exclusively by the public general interest, and I have been acting strictly in line with all applicable rules and procedures. I fully commit to maintaining these ethical standards of independence, professional integrity and general interest. I will act only in the European public interest, I will not take or seek instructions from any government or other institution, body, office or entity, and I will honour the code of conduct of Members of the Commission, notably its provisions on conflict of interests. I also underline that there is no source of potential conflict of interest regarding the policy areas assigned to me.

## **2. Management of the portfolio and cooperation with the European Parliament**

*Can you commit to duly informing Parliament about your actions and those of your departments? In what respect do you consider yourself accountable to Parliament?*

*What specific commitments are you prepared to make in terms of your engagement with and presence in Parliament, both in committee and in plenary, transparency, cooperation and effective follow-up to Parliament's positions and requests for legislative initiatives? In relation to planned initiatives or ongoing procedures, are you ready to provide Parliament with timely information and documents on an equal footing with the Council?*

I am a firm believer in the power of dialogue. In all roles I served, I always made it my mission to engage meaningfully with counterparts and partners across the board to achieve shared objectives. It is with this exact spirit that, if confirmed, I shall engage with the European Parliament throughout my mandate.

I will establish regular, structured channels of communication with the Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Coordinators of the responsible Committee and will systematically offer to meet with these Honourable Members as key interlocutors. I commit to maintaining an open channel of communication with the CULT Committee and to hold regular meetings with the Committee. It will also be a pleasure for me to participate in plenary debates in the Parliament on topics of my portfolio.

This will also of course mean that I look forward to regular participation in CULT Committee meetings and will be available to respond to any requests from the European Parliament to debate topics within my portfolio in the most appropriate format, as set out in the Political Guidelines 2024-2029 of President-elect von der Leyen. As also set out in the Political Guidelines, I am committed to submit an annual progress report to the CULT Committee and the Council configuration on Education, Youth, Culture and Sport, focusing on Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture, and Sport. I will also set up dedicated internal procedures between my future Cabinet and services to ensure that all parliamentary resolutions, questions and petitions under my responsibility receive a timely response.

If confirmed, I will respect in my contacts with the Members of the European Parliament the 2010 Framework Agreement between the Parliament and the Commission and the 2016 Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making. I support revising the 2010 framework agreement and renewing the 2016 Better Law Making agreement, as outlined in the Political Guidelines 2024-2029, and will work closely with the responsible Commissioners.

I also pledge to engage constructively with the European Parliament within the framework of Article 225 TFEU, including through participation in structured dialogues with the CULT committee. I refer here to President-elect von der Leyen's commitment in the Political Guidelines 2024-2029 to respond to such Resolutions with a legislative act when requested, respecting proportionality, subsidiarity, and Better Law-Making principles.

Strengthening the special partnership between the European Parliament and the Commission and transparency in the policymaking process are two key pillars of delivering effective policies. They are, moreover, instrumental in increasing citizens' trust in the European project.

I fully acknowledge the importance of equal access to information for the co-legislators.

I would underline that there is no source of potential conflict of interest regarding the policy areas assigned to me.

### Questions from the Committee on Culture and Education

*3. What is your vision for the future of the EU's youth policy, both in terms of strategic priorities and EU budgetary resources available? In particular, how will you ensure that the follow-up to the European Year of Youth, the implementation of the 'youth check' and the coordination of the annual Youth Policy Dialogues will effectively work in practice? Beyond that, how will you ensure that the specific demands and engagement of young people continue to be addressed throughout the next five years, both in terms of policy development and decision making processes? What other actions will you take to ensure that youth mainstreaming and youth participation in both democratic life and in a future strategy on Intergenerational Fairness become a reality?*

President von der Leyen has made a clear commitment to give young people greater freedom and responsibilities within our societies and democracies, and if confirmed, I will work tirelessly with all stakeholders towards this goal. My priority would be to further strengthen youth participation in democratic life and to ensure that youth perspectives are integrated into policymaking through youth mainstreaming practices across the Commission. I am fully committed to ensuring a lasting and meaningful legacy of the 2022 European Year of Youth and I will support each Member of the College in the organisation of the annual Youth Policy Dialogues, the first of which will take place within the first 100 days. Through these dialogues, insights from young people can be gathered and considered in the shaping of EU policies, fostering a more inclusive and responsive approach whilst allowing us to promote our core values.

The dialogues will complement the 'youth check', which the Commission will apply as of 2025 to ensure that the views of young people are factored into the preparation of the most youth relevant policy initiatives. This demonstrates the Commission's commitment to young people's ideas, as requested through the EU Youth Dialogue and other youth-led initiatives. I am committed to working on successful implementation of the 'youth check'. With the 'youth check' the Commission will screen the relevant major initiatives of its annual work programme for significant relevance for young people and organise dedicated youth consultations for initiatives assessed to have such relevance. In addition to future-proofing our policymaking, this approach will also contribute to promoting intergenerational fairness across our policies. I will work together with the Commissioner for Economy and Productivity; Implementation and Simplification to ensure that the 'youth check' is implemented by making full use of Better Regulation tools.

Opportunities to engage in EU programmes are one of the best ways to underline the potential of the EU for young people. Erasmus+ offers meaningful opportunities, through education and training, promotion of physical activity, as well as non-formal or informal learning activities for young people to engage more in society, in the labour market and connect with their peers from other countries. This fosters the development of social and intercultural competences and supports the promotion of EU values. I stand ready to fully support the work of the Executive Vice-President for People, Skills and Preparedness to strengthen Erasmus+, as outlined in the Political Guidelines, for people to develop skills and create shared experiences and a better understanding of each other. I believe this would also contribute to young people's engagement in the European project and democracy.

To achieve our goal of enhancing youth democratic participation, I am committed to linking together already existing and planned new initiatives so that they are mutually reinforcing. I would create synergies between the 'youth check', the annual Youth Policy Dialogues with Commissioners, the EU Youth Dialogue, the new Youth Stakeholders Group and the President's Youth Advisory Board, which I will help to set up, if confirmed.

In the same spirit, it is essential to ensure that EU youth policy actions are developed in synergy with the EU Strategy on the rights of the child. While both policy files address in principle different age groups, with different

legal rights and needs, the continuity of actions and policies between the two is crucial for the successful achievement of EU objectives, including towards intergenerational fairness.

As the first ever Commissioner-designate for intergenerational fairness, I attach particular importance to instilling a true and lasting culture of participatory democracy that applies to all ages, including senior citizens. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, and the Rule of Law to enhance the democratic empowerment and representation of young people, including in view of their electoral rights as first-time voters. Advancement of EU citizenship rights and citizens' democratic engagement is fundamental to our democracies.

*4. Political disillusionment, polarisation, also the lack of perspectives and hope for the future among young people are some of the biggest challenges to democracy and to the EU project as such. How will you address the widespread political disillusionment, the culmination of which we have recently witnessed in the European elections? In this context, how do you plan to address the impact of social media on young people and on their general wellbeing, including excessive screen time, cyberbullying as well as the impact on their political understanding and engagement?*

By investing in the EU's young people and future generations, we can maintain strong foundations for a united and democratic Europe, where EU values and principles continue to thrive for decades to come. Being a young person in 2024 comes with its unique set of challenges. Recent trends and statistics relating to the political disillusionment of young people are a cause of concern and therefore a sustained and concerted effort to identify and address the root causes of these issues is urgently needed.

Disillusionment is multi-faceted and driven by several factors. Part of this is clear attempts by authoritarian regimes and non-democratic actors to create and increase societal division in Europe. Such actors seek to stoke mistrust and exploit disillusionment with established democratic institutions, and undermine the democratic process in the EU, weakening the democratic voice of citizens and civil society. Young people are continually exposed to tactics like disinformation. This happens notably in the online world, where methods are used to amplify polarisation, leaving young people with a feeling of insecurity and vulnerability, affecting the trust they have in democracy and established institutions. They have to navigate a rapidly changing world in which cyberbullying and other online and offline challenges are prevalent.

I am fully committed to using all the tools at my disposal, including developing youth-centred policies and fostering dialogue, to reunite our societies and support young people, building on our shared European values. We must work together to ensure that young people are equipped with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to be responsible, engaged and active citizens.

To support young people in navigating the challenges, and building on the already robust regulatory framework, different areas of policy need to work together. Cyberbullying is another major concern affecting our youth and, if confirmed, one of the areas on which my portfolio would focus is to combat abusive behaviour online by putting forward an action plan against cyberbullying. It will be essential to pursue a comprehensive approach that addresses the issue from different angles, covering prevention of harmful online practices and engaging the education sector, various civil society actors and trusted flaggers under the Digital Services Act.

Our digital society brings huge opportunities, but can also affect people's physical health, mental wellbeing and safety. We must protect especially our children and young people who are vulnerable to harm from social media and excessive screen time. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commissioner for Health, as well as the Commissioner for Preparedness, Crisis Management and Equality and the Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, on the EU-wide inquiry on the broader impacts of social media on wellbeing.

The need to support youth engagement in the democratic process and to combat the pressures on young people today will also feed into the work led by the Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, and the Rule of Law on the new European Democracy Shield. Challenges, such as disinformation and foreign information manipulation affect young people in specific ways. Social media's ability to amplify voices and movements has made them a powerful tool for youth engagement, but navigating them requires critical thinking. Investing in digital and media literacy will be key to enable young Europeans to critically assess the information, engage safely online, and navigate the complexities of social media and technology. Higher literacy levels would also foster their abilities to actively participate in the democratic life and engage in the policymaking processes. If confirmed, I will work closely with colleagues to mainstream youth considerations into these policies and to promote full consultation of youth representation.

*5. While addressing the specific implications of Artificial Intelligence, what is your vision for the safeguard and promotion of Europe's cultural and creative sectors and industries? What will an effective Culture Compass comprise to make sure culture and cultural heritage are continuously funded and are maintained at the very heart of European policy making? More concretely, with increasing pressure on the EU budget, how will you ensure that Creative Europe, as the only European programme dedicated exclusively to the cultural and creative sectors, will not be reduced in the current EU budget and will be reinforced in the next MFF?*

Culture and diverse cultural heritage are the very soul of our European way of life, a precious resource economy and DNA of our society. Safeguarding and promoting the diversity and dynamism of the cultural and creative sectors needs a comprehensive approach, in full recognition of both the intrinsic value of culture and its vital role as driver of social cohesion, development, and a sector which plays a crucial role in the EU in terms of innovation and competitiveness. If confirmed, I will work to maximise the cultural sector's contribution to the EU's economy and citizens' wellbeing.

The cultural and creative sectors and industries contribute almost 4% to the EU's GDP and provide around 8 million jobs. Cultural and creative sectors and industries are also vital for local and regional development. They are a catalyst for urban regeneration, and for the attractiveness of our regions. Unlocking the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors and industries is central to our vision for the sector's future. If confirmed, I will focus on addressing key challenges and leveraging the sector's innovation potential to boost competitiveness and safeguard its future. Equally important, I would continue the work to support cultural and creative SMEs, helping them remain competitive, for instance by fostering business support and networking opportunities.

The cultural and creative sectors and industries in the EU are operating in an ever-changing landscape, and are facing a number of new realities. This creates new challenges for these sectors, including those relating to the working conditions of artists and creative professionals, skills shortages, the impact of climate change on our cultural heritage, and the impact of Artificial Intelligence. To address these challenges, cultural and creative sectors and industries need tailored support. The EU has undertaken significant steps to enable a robust regulatory framework that supports the creators' economy and cultural diversity, but more needs to be done. Artificial Intelligence also yields significant opportunities for Europe's cultural and creative sectors and industries, such as countering illegal trafficking of cultural goods, improved access to culture and preservation of cultural heritage.

Building on existing regulations, including the Artificial Intelligence Act, if confirmed, I will work with the Executive Vice President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy on a European Artificial Intelligence strategy for the cultural and creative sectors and industries, with the aim of ensuring that Artificial Intelligence enables and reinforces human creativity rather than replace humans, and that it safeguards cultural and linguistic diversity, while helping us to remain competitive in the global market.

The prosperity of cultural and creative sectors and industries, and cultural and creative SMEs, relies on people acquiring the skills they need for the industries to remain competitive. This includes digital skills, particularly in advanced technologies, and entrepreneurial skills, including intellectual property knowledge. That is why I would work closely with the Executive-Vice President for People, Skills and Preparedness to enhance current efforts within the Pact for Skills large-scale partnership in the cultural and creative sectors and industries and to promote awareness and protection of intellectual property.

A comprehensive approach to culture requires collaboration across the Commission and a shared vision from all stakeholders. If confirmed, I will lead work to develop a new Culture Compass for the EU as a comprehensive strategic framework to guide and harness the multiple dimensions of culture. In line with the Political Guidelines, the new Culture Compass would improve the coherence and visibility of EU action in support of Europe's diverse culture and its rich cultural heritage, to the benefit of all Europeans. I would focus on maximising synergies between EU policies, for both internal and external dimension, and for the cultural and creative sectors and industries. Links between culture and health could be strengthened based on evidence and recommendations from EU preparatory action CultureForHealth. In Europe's regions, targeted actions support culture, which is essential for sustainable development, attracting young people, and countering population decline. Aligning better the multiple cultural policy tools would help to sustain and enrich Europe's culture and cultural heritage for future generations. This approach should also feed in the significance for culture of many other EU policies, such as regional development and innovation.

When it comes to public financing and investment, the first priority will be ensuring the use of the resources available via NextGenerationEU and programmes in the current budget, where in addition to Creative Europe, support for culture as a horizontal policy field is reflected in close to 20 other EU funding instruments. The design

of the future multiannual financial framework and its instruments is ahead of us. Our reflection needs to start with 'what we should finance' to then see 'how' best we can deliver on our objectives and maximise results on the ground. This will allow to make our funding more impactful. What is sure is that we need a more strategic approach to culture, one which triggers a dynamic interaction between the commercial and societal vitality of the cultural and creative industries. I will work towards identifying the best ways to achieve this and to engage in the work of the Commission as a whole to develop the best possible package for the next multiannual financial framework proposal.

*6. How do you plan to safeguard cultural and linguistic diversity, artistic freedom, to enhance cultural collaboration, public access to culture, to promote the role of culture as a means for inclusion, to ensure the prominence of European creative content online and to support the improvement of the professional and social situation of artists and other professionals in the cultural and creative sectors? Furthermore, how do you intend to promote European works internationally and improve international cultural relations?*

Cultural and linguistic diversity is a key value which lies at the heart of the EU. The numerous EU initiatives to promote and safeguard cultural diversity include regulatory measures, support through funding programmes, and flagship initiatives such as the European Data Space for Cultural Heritage or the European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage. The EU is a party in its own right to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. If confirmed, I will build on these initiatives to continue championing cultural diversity as a core element of my mandate.

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive, as the main building block of EU media regulation, contains rules that aim to foster cultural diversity by ensuring presence and prominence of European creative content on streaming services and incentivising investment in such content. It also recognises the possibility for Member States to take measures to ensure prominence of audiovisual media services of general interest to foster media pluralism, freedom of speech and cultural diversity. The current study on the discoverability of European creative content online will help to identify challenges and innovative solutions to ensure that European cultural and linguistic diversity is also safeguarded in the digital world. If confirmed, I will work to make the best of these rules, fully implementing and seeing what more can be done.

Freedom of artistic expression is essential for democratic societies and cultural diversity. Protecting it from political interference and censorship is key to building a common European cultural space. If confirmed, I will work with the Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, and the Rule of Law, to engage the European Parliament, Member States, and civil society in a common effort to uphold the freedom of artists. All available tools must be used to support this important priority, including the mobilisation of our funding programmes, as it is currently the case for the Creative Europe programme, which funds cultural cooperation projects and cultural networks.

Safeguarding cultural diversity and the creative process also means creating a conducive environment for cultural professionals. I share the concerns over the working conditions of artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors. I am fully committed to pursuing the work initiated under the previous Commission in reply to the European Parliament's own-initiative legislative report to improve the professional and social situation of artists and other professionals in the cultural and creative sectors. If confirmed, I will cooperate closely with Commissioners with relevant portfolios to determine the scope for further EU action in this sector. I will also work closely with the European Parliament, the Member States, social partners and stakeholders in taking this important issue forward. As a first step, if confirmed, I would organise a High-level Round Table with relevant stakeholders so that we continue to chart the way forward on this matter together.

Culture and heritage bring people together and foster a sense of belonging. However, access to them is unequal, with many facing barriers due to socio-economic status, disability, geographic location and other factors. Cultural participation enhances democracy and cultivates more actively engaged citizens. If confirmed, I will work closely with the European Parliament, Member States and other relevant partners and stakeholders to make cultural experiences and heritage more accessible and inclusive, especially for young people.

At a time when our values and security are being challenged by increasing geopolitical instabilities, culture can, and should, play a greater global role. Culture helps build partnerships on equal terms, promote values, and support peace, security, and sustainable growth. Safeguarding cultural heritage, especially in politically fragile regions, is our common duty and responsibility, and if confirmed, this will be one of my priorities. In the framework of our overall support to Ukraine, it is particularly important for me to work on the protection of the rich and unique Ukrainian cultural heritage.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the High-Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President and other responsible Commissioners to leverage the power of culture in the EU's external action. The EU is committed to strengthening the cultural dimension of sustainable development. If confirmed, I will support international efforts to reinforce the role of culture in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals beyond 2030. Developing international cultural relations and promoting European works abroad requires close cooperation with Member States, national cultural institutes and their European network, our network of EU Delegations, and other cultural stakeholders, including the networks and platforms supported by Creative Europe. I will also focus on continued capacity building, enhanced networking opportunities, and dissemination of best practices among the Creative Europe network members.

*7. How will you strive to ensure the strengthening of the European Sport Model based on values, solidarity and inclusiveness and to promote sport as a tool to improve physical and mental wellbeing for all, across generations while contributing to cohesive societies? Beyond that, how will you work together with the other Members of the College and DGs to create strong synergies between sport policy and education policy and to strengthen European sport diplomacy?*

Sport is increasingly recognised as a public good and valuable European asset – economically, socially, politically and culturally. This creates an opportunity for more assertive policy action at European level to help promote and protect our European Sport Model.

This Model has recently been challenged in numerous ways – from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to the massive foreign state investment in European sport, and the significant governance, welfare and financial sustainability issues in sport. We also have high-profile judgments by the European Court of Justice which can have a real impact on the way sport is organised in Europe.

Strengthening the European Sport Model based on solidarity, values and competitiveness will be one of my top priorities, if confirmed. I would work in close and continuous cooperation with relevant actors to preserve its key features, including the autonomy and good governance of sport, the openness of competitions, the value of merit, solidarity, interdependence between elite and grassroots sport and the role of volunteers.

We need to continue working on the strengthening of the European Sport Model. It faces some long-standing challenges, such as the persistent underrepresentation of women in sport and, in particular, sport governance, as well as hate speech, abuse and discrimination, or cases of corruption and doping. The stakes in European sport are high and this is why a new and ambitious strategy on the future of the European Sport Model is needed. If confirmed, I will engage in a dialogue with the European Parliament, the wide spectrum of the sport movement, and Member States to ensure that all stakeholders' views are taken into consideration when addressing these challenges. In full respect of the autonomy of sport organisations, I would explore and facilitate joint solutions.

Investing in sport is also an investment in public health. WHO and OECD study StepUp! found in 2023 that if the EU countries tackled physical inactivity in the whole population, they would save 0.6% of their health-care budget on average and more than 10 000 premature deaths each year could be prevented. It is estimated that for every euro invested in increasing physical activity, there is a return of EUR 1.7 in economic benefits. In addition, sport has a significant social value. Its immaterial value is undeniable in terms of community-building, fostering social skills or inclusion. Sport is a driver of social change, strengthening and building cohesive communities and shared values. It plays a vital role in promoting both physical and mental wellbeing across generations, fostering healthier lifestyles while strengthening the fabric of our societies. If confirmed, I would prioritise the sport participation of all, with special attention to people with fewer opportunities. Being inspired by my participation in the #BeActive campaign earlier this year, my ambition is to promote even further the European Week of Sport and the #BeActive campaign, making full use of the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme to support the grassroots sport community. On these initiatives and beyond, I would be delighted to collaborate with the European Parliament to promote sport participation for all.

I would like to explore a possible update of the Council Recommendation on health-enhancing physical activity across sectors, emphasising notably the importance of access to sport and physical activity for everyone, regardless of their age, background or ability, and the role it can play in fostering mental health and forging cohesive communities.

I am also committed to promoting the synergies between sport policy and education policy. Sport is an excellent vehicle, especially for young people, to gain transferable, social and personal skills. It can contribute to preparing individuals for success in both their personal and professional lives. Being actively involved in a local football

club, I have witnessed first-hand that through sport, children and young people can learn about the importance of fair play, leadership and teamwork. If confirmed, I will work with the Executive Vice-President for People, Skills and Preparedness to further support the Member States in ensuring that our young people have access to high-quality physical education and sports opportunities that support their overall development and well-being.

Through sport and its principles of respect and fair play, people are united across borders and social, cultural, and economic divides can be bridged. At the same time, sport has an undeniable political dimension and is often used as an instrument of soft power. I was impressed by the power of the recent Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which succeeded in showcasing a taste of the European way of life and our shared values of tolerance, equality, respect and solidarity, as well as fairness and unity.

To safeguard the legacy of Paris 2024 and to ensure that the major sport events are instrumental in spreading positive values and promoting peace, freedom and human rights at global level, I will uphold a Sport Diplomacy Dialogue with the international and European sport community. Given the cross-cutting nature of this work, I will reach out to other Members of the College and Commission services, as well as the HRVP. As on the sport pitch, we are stronger when we play together.

#### Question from the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

*8. In your mission letter, you are tasked with preparing a Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness and to implement youth checks. However, an intergenerational approach needs to be holistic and focus on all generations. What actions and measures will you propose to ensure the social inclusion of all generations and their full participation in society and the economy? What legislative initiatives do you envisage with regard to youth and intergenerational fairness and how are you going to cooperate with Executive Vice-President-designate Minzatu in this context?*

I am proud to have been nominated by the President for the role as the first-ever Commissioner for intergenerational fairness. I am committed to a policy approach that comprehensively addresses the needs and aspirations of all generations, drawing on our past and preparing for the future. We must aim at balancing the needs and challenges of different generations, which is crucial for societal cohesion and the welfare of all age groups. A Eurobarometer from 2022 pointed to an interesting conclusion: that citizens tend to express higher levels of life satisfaction in countries with lower age-related inequalities. So this is a determining factor in our societal well-being.

If confirmed, I will support mainstreaming of the use of strategic foresight across the Commission to inform policymaking and strategic planning, to enable the EU to meet its strategic objectives and strengthen our preparedness to better face risks and use the opportunities ahead that may materialise for future generations. This includes intergenerational fairness, on which I have been tasked to prepare a strategy mapping out how we can strengthen communication between generations and ensure that interests of present and future generations are respected throughout our policy and law making. My priorities would include promoting intergenerational learning, fostering multigenerational workforce and supporting community-based care or intergenerational living, to strengthen solidarity and retain human capital, while mitigating demographic challenges.

Solidarity between generations is enshrined in the Treaties and the full participation of all generations in society, democracy, and the economy is fundamental. The policy fields that are affected range from education and youth, climate policy, health and well-being, equality, to employment and social affairs, fiscal policy or housing, security and defence and others. If confirmed, I would also integrate the intergenerational fairness dimension in the specific areas I would be responsible for. The 'youth check' will help future-proofing our policymaking and support intergenerational fairness.

I believe that in an effort to promote intergenerational fairness, priority should go to supporting the Member States in undertaking reforms that span across the life cycle: facilitating longer healthy lives and working lives, addressing gaps in access to social protection for people in non-standard forms of employment and the self-employed, gender gaps at all ages and enhancing skills and labour market participation of young and older people. In addition, we must make further efforts to fight poverty at all ages and to facilitate affordable access to goods and services, including energy and transport, as well as access to affordable housing.

If confirmed, I will use strategic foresight to support policy development work across the College, including with the Executive Vice-President for People, Skills and Preparedness. A five-year mandate gives the Commission a powerful opportunity to build our awareness and deepen our understanding of the world ahead of us, to make us

better prepared and to build the sustainability of our policies. This feeds directly into intergenerational fairness, as part of our overall task of building a prosperous, diverse and equitable society.

#### Question from the Committee on Legal Affairs

##### *9. Child Rights Strategy Pillars - child friendly justice in areas of civil and family law and better law-making*

*As enshrined in your mission letter, you are going to be responsible for implementation of the 2021 EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child to be continued in the current legislative term. Two of the main pillars of the EU Strategy are child-friendly justice and child participation in political and democratic life, and JURI Committee is responsible, among others, for civil and family law and better law-making and impact assessment of the EU legislation. Could you explain how you are going to collaborate in practice with Commissioners responsible for ongoing and future files in those fields and whether you will support the existence of the EU Child participation platform to serve as a consultation tool for the upcoming proposals that influence the life and wellbeing of the youngest EU generation?*

The EU Strategy on the rights of the child is our compass to promote and protect the rights of children across the EU. Child-friendly justice is one of the thematic areas of the Strategy, on which we will continue to put our efforts to ensure children have their best possible experience when they enter in contact with the justice system. If confirmed, I will work together with the responsible Members of the College to ensure the practical implementation of the EU acquis in civil, criminal and administrative law (for example, in migration procedures) so that children are protected in judicial proceedings.

In the field of civil and family law, and particularly within the context of child-friendly justice, my primary objective would be to ensure equal treatment for all children in cross-border situations, with every action grounded in the best interests of the child. I see the focus on intensifying the monitoring of the correct application of the existing family law instruments, such as the Brussels IIb Regulation by the Member States, and facilitating the adoption of the Regulation on the recognition of parenthood. If confirmed, I would collaborate closely with the Commissioner for Democracy, Justice and the Rule of Law, who is responsible for civil and family law matters, in following up on these priorities.

In line with the Political Guidelines, I am committed to making sure that children and young people can use their own voice to help shape the future. Participation in political and democratic life is another thematic area of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child. The EU Children's Participation Platform is an innovative way to promote child participation at all levels – EU, national and local – and it offers a safe space to have a meaningful dialogue with young EU citizens, involving them in decisions taken at EU level. If confirmed, I will ensure that actions on child and youth participation will be developed in synergy, also with broader initiatives such as the Democracy Shield.

#### Question from the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

*10. Your mission focuses on the implementation of the 2021 EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child as well as on the adoption of initiatives ensuring that young people can help shape the future of the Union. Which specific steps will you take to strengthen children and youth participation in the decision-making process and, above all, to harmonise it throughout the Union? Are you considering a follow-up mechanism of participatory processes for children and young people, which would ensure that child and youth consultation processes are meaningful? Could you please elaborate more on the concept of 'youth check' and the structure of the 'Youth Policy Dialogues'? Which actors will be involved in them? Which areas/topics will you target? Your mission seems to lack references to initiatives on children in the digital era. Are you considering to take concrete initiatives on this issue?*

*For instance, what is your strategy for reducing cyberbullying, and do you believe that information campaigns, education, and media literacy are effective tools to tackle excessive screen time and negative effects of social media for young people? What would be the ideal outcomes of an EU inquiry into the broader impact of social media, and do you anticipate any differing results compared to previous studies? Additionally, which steps are you prepared to take to ensure the protection of child victims of cyberbullying in the context of the implementation of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child?*

The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child serves as an umbrella, under which actions can be adapted to tackle emerging challenges, as identified in the Political Guidelines and in my mission letter. If confirmed, I will work closely with other Members of the College to ensure, in synergy across all relevant EU policies, that legislation and funding programmes address pressing children's needs. Children have a right to participate in political and

democratic life. This is one of the key areas covered by the EU Strategy. Children who understand the importance of active citizenship grow to become active young citizens. As explained in my reply to the ninth question, the EU Children's Participation Platform is a key instrument to keep involving children in decisions taken at EU level, in cooperation with the European Parliament. If confirmed, my intention is to ensure that the platform fosters participation of the youngest citizens to help shape their future, in a continuum with youth participation actions. As the Commission is involving more and more children in its activities, I believe that it is crucial to apply child safeguarding frameworks in these actions and I would work to that end.

The 'youth check' will be one of the core instruments to continue the work to further enable Europe's youth as actors of change. If confirmed, I will ensure, by implementing the 'youth check', that voices of young people are systematically considered across the full range of policy areas. As also explained in my reply to the third question, with the 'youth check' the Commission will screen all initiatives under the annual work programme for significant relevance for young people and organise dedicated youth consultations for initiatives assessed to have such relevance.

We need a common approach across several policy areas to address youth concerns, such as mental health and wellbeing, housing, the impact of climate change, skills development, social media and others. To ensure that young people from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to articulate their opinions, express their ideas, and engage in constructive discussions, I will support organisation of the annual Youth Policy Dialogues, starting already in the first 100 days of the mandate. I would also help to establish the President's Youth Advisory Board, which will advise on issues that matter to young people and to act as a sounding board for ideas developed by the Commission.

As stressed in the Political Guidelines, one of our greatest challenges in this decade is protecting the mental health of our children and young people, especially online. There is no space for violence, hate, abuse or bullying, whether online or offline, and we need to address new challenges of virtual worlds, artificial intelligence and digital overexposure. That must be at the heart of our work on cyberbullying, together with the Member States. Firstly, it starts with prevention, awareness-raising, fighting discrimination, abusive and toxic behaviour, radicalisation and hate speech online, to make sure that children can thrive in a safer climate of wellbeing at school, with their friends, and at home. Secondly, children should know how to report bullying and to receive quick and comprehensive support when they do so. Thirdly, it is crucial that Member States' competent authorities act against perpetrators to reverse abusive and toxic behaviour.

Protection of children's rights has a strong digital dimension. The Artificial Intelligence Act aims to strike a balance between innovation and protection of fundamental rights, including the rights of the child. The initiative on virtual worlds will ensure that metaverses reflect EU values and fundamental rights, including the rights of the child. Another key initiative to improve the protection of children online will be the Digital Fairness Act, which the Commissioner for Democracy, Justice and the Rule of Law is tasked to develop. If confirmed, I will support the work on that.

The Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted in May 2024, requires for the first time the criminalisation of certain forms of cyber violence against women and girls in the Member States. The new crimes cover the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and cyber harassment, crimes which affect many young people today. If confirmed, I will support the Commissioner responsible for Equality in the implementation of the new rules, with special attention to child-friendly reporting of incidents and support measures for families and schools. I would also cooperate with the Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration in his efforts leading the work to better protect children against sexual abuse online and offline, and with the Commissioner for Democracy, Justice and the Rule of Law to ensure that we have justice systems adapted to children, whether victims or perpetrators.

The Political Guidelines commit to the setting up of an enquiry into the broader impact of social media, and, if confirmed, I would contribute with a particular focus on the impact of social media and excessive screen time on young people. It will help us to monitor progress compared with previous assessments and to map remaining challenges, for example, around addictive, harmful or aggressive business practices by companies, and the health status of young people, as we become more literate and resilient in dealing with the digital sphere. As set out in the mission letter for the Commissioner responsible for Health, the inquiry should be part of an evidence-based debate. I firmly believe that we need a comprehensive plan to safeguard young people's mental and emotional wellbeing, with actions for policymakers, governments, schools, families, and others, working hand-in-hand to mitigate the online risks.

If confirmed, I will lead work on the action plan against cyberbullying, building on the digital part of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child. To develop effective solutions, I would harness the Commission's Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+), leveraging the extensive experience and expertise of the network of Safer Internet Centres, which the EU co-funds. These centres play a crucial role in fighting cyberbullying by raising awareness, providing resources and tools to young people, parents, and educators and by encouraging reporting of incidents and support-seeking among young users and their families. I would encourage Member States to appoint trusted flaggers under the Digital Services Act with proven expertise on the protection of minors, including cyberbullying. I also see a need to reflect on the potential benefits of a common EU framework on countering cyberbullying and developing a joint definition of this behaviour.

As fighting cyberbullying relies on a whole-of-society approach, the action plan would draw heavily on work under other portfolios, to embrace issues including education, digital society, combatting hate speech, and security, as well as equality and health dimensions.